(b) if so, the details of the same;

(c) the actions taken, if any, for tracking the lost instruments, including filing of complaint about the same with the police;

(d) whether some of these lost DDs are detected to have been put into circulation in banking channel by forging signature etc. of the SBI officials; and

(e) if so, the details thereof indicating actions taken against issues and recipients of these forged DDs?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) State Bank of India (SBI) has reported that they have no record to show loss of a large number of bank Demand Draft (DD) forms and cheques dispatched in 1979 by Security Forms Office (SFO), Nasik Road (Maharashtra) to branches of SBI in Bihar.

(b) to (e) Do not arise.

Percolation of subsidy benefits to BPL population

546. SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the targeted below-poverty line (BPL) population is getting full benefits of the huge subsidies or the position remains static as stated by our former Prime Minister Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji that only 15 paise of every rupee spent reaches the needy;

(b) whether new strategies which have been adopted to ensure that BPL groups, small and marginal farmers, or similarly placed deprived sections of the society fully get the intended benefits of the financial subsidies being provided; and

(c) what outlay of funds for subsidies was provided in 2006-07 from Central budgetary allocations and was this full utilized?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) The food subsidies are largely designed to be targeted to people below the poverty line (BPL), the other two subsidies, namely fertilizer and petroleum, particularly the LPG are available to all users/consumers. A study by Programme Evaluation Organisation (PEO) of the Planning Commission regarding Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) which covered 18 States reveals that though the offtake per household has shown improvement under TPDS, yet only about 57 per cent of the BPL households are covered by it. Further the report finds that only about 42 per cent of the subsidized grains issued by the Central Pool reaches the target group. As per the Union Budget, in 2006-07, as against a budgeted provision of Rs. 46,213 crore on all subsidies, the actual expenditure was Rs. 57, 125 crore.

Effects of hardening of the rupee

547. SHRI JESUDASU SEELAM:
SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Centre has begun receiving communications from the States complaining about the hardening of the rupee eating into jobs in their regions;

(b) whether Government is aware of media reports that the rupee rise contagion has began spreading beyond textiles and handicrafts, fisheries, plantations, cotton, jute, leather and plastic;

(c) whether the States have conveyed extent of job losses already taken place in their regions and have sought Centre's intervention;

(d) whether while discussing the Eleventh Plan paper Government considered these views of the States; and

(e) the measures, Government is considering to take to help the States in improving the financial position?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) Representations have been received from exporters/exporters associations and other stake holders including State Governments on the impact of rupee appreciation on exports and employment. These representations and views of State Governments are *inter alia* taken into consideration while formulating policies and preparing the Eleventh Plan. Despite the appreciation of the rupee, exports grew by 21.6 percent in dollar terms in April-December 2007. However, sectors such as textiles and handicrafts, which have low import intensity, have experienced lower export growth, while sectors with high import intensity like POL, have witnessed higher export growth.

(e) As there was concern on possible adverse impact of rupee appreciation on labour intensive exports, the Government announced several relief measures, among which were the following:—

(i) Enhancement by 3 per cent of the Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) rates for 9 sectors i.e., textiles (including handloom), readymade garments, leather products, handicrafts, engineering products, processed agricultural products, marine products, sports goods and toys, and by 2 per cent for others.

(ii) Reduction in Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC) premium by 10 per cent.

(iii) Release of around Rs. 600 crore to clear all arrears of terminal excise duties and Central Sales Tax (CST) reimbursement.

(iv) Enhancement of the rates of duty drawback by around 10 per cent to 40 per cent. The drawback was increased in most of the cases which have been made effective retrospectively from April, 1, 2007. In few cases, such as, primary steel, dyes and chemicals, where the drawback rates have been reduced, this has been done prospectively from 18.7.2007.

(v) Interest subvention of 2% for pre-shipment and post-shipment credit for the 9 sectors and all exporters from the SME sector which was further extended from 31.12.2007 to 31.3.2008. Additional subvention of 2% from 1.11.2007 to 31.3.2008 for pre-shipment and post-shipment credit for leather & leather manufacturers, marine products, handicrafts and all categories of textiles under existing scheme including Ready Made Garments (RMG) and Carpets but excluding man-made fibre.

(vi) Refund of Service Tax to Exporters for use of Services not in the nature of "input services".

(vii) Provision to pay interest on Exchange Earner's Foreign Currency (EEFC) balances for outstanding balances.

(viii) Widening the list of interest subvention of 2% for pre-shipment and post-shipment credit to include jute textiles and carpets; processed cashew, coffee and tea; solvent extracted de-oiled cake; and plastics & linoleum.

(ix) Raising the revenue ceiling for Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana by Rs. 300 crore (from Rs. 200 crore to Rs. 500 crore).

(x) Reduction in customs duty on some items relating to textiles sector.

Investments in Home Mortgage Financial Institutions

548. SHRI RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that foreign financial institutions that have invested in Home Mortgage Financial Institutions and banks are selling their stakes;

(b) if so, whether there is any expected financial turbulence and implication by such trend; and

(c) what steps Government proposes to take to secure the stability of the Indian economy in the face of above?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Information is being collected and shall be placed on the Table on the House.

Loans advanced to foreign countries

†549. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether several countries including Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya and Sudan have not repaid the loans advanced to them by Government;

(b) if so, the details of efforts being made to recover the amount of loans till date; and

(c) the names of the countries against which the amount of loans extended by Government is outstanding alongwith the details of amount of loan and the dates since the same is outstanding?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Among the specific countries mentioned at part (a) no amount is due from any country other than Kenya. The borrowing countries are beign pursued as and when necessary to ensure timely repayment. The details of the loan sanctioned is given in the Statement.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.